

week apart in June of 1838; he was 78, she was 71. One wonders why their deaths occurred so close together. Was it the result of a cholera epidemic, a common killer at the time; or was it just coincidence? John and Anney are buried side by side in the stone-wall encircled family cemetery situated on the farm near Brentwood. The acreage is still known in some Williamson County Circles as the "Old John Gray place". In more recent times it has been owned by the Puryear family, and was recently sold to a local real estate developer. We were fortunate enough to discover the place before the old home and several accessory buildings (including a 3-story smoke house with unusually thick brick walls) were torn down. In anticipation of the developer's bulldozers, the place had reached a state of disrepair. But the beautiful pastoral setting made it easy to imagine what the scene was at one time.

At the death of John and Anney Gray, their property was divided among the surviving heirs. Since there was no will, it was necessary for an administrator to be appointed and a sale conducted. John Gray was by no means the most affluent citizen of Williamson County at the time of his death, but the estate he left was sizable. The inventory¹⁸ presented by the administrator, James Shannon, to the county court makes interesting reading. It includes the myriad items that were necessary in the running of a plantation -- a great variety of tools and numerous farm animals, including horses, cattle, oxen, sheep, and hogs, in addition to household goods and his twenty-two slaves. (This is a point that always makes me flinch when reading old records.

¹⁸/Williamson County Will Book 7, p. 1-3; p. 324; p. 338.

It seems ironical that it was only recently that these first citizens of our country had fought so valiantly to achieve "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Here they were placing a monetary value on human beings and dividing them among surviving heirs!)

At the public sale, the list of purchasers includes a few individuals who were not family members, but over and over again we see the names of the sons and sons-in-law of John and Anney Gray. For example William Gray received (purchased) a desk, a clock, a cupboard, a sugar chest with sugar in it (\$6.00 worth at 15¢/pound), a churn, 2 sieves, 18 pounds of wool, 112 pounds of cotton, a pair of flat irons, a wheat fan, 25 pounds of lard, 3 lots of hogs, 70 barrels of corn, etc., etc.. For some reason Price Gray (our ancestor) bought very little -- 2 axes and 2 flat irons. He received two slaves, Henry and Nancy.

At an earlier date, Price had married and settled on a beautiful farm in Williamson County, south and west of his parent's location. This farm was known to my father's generation as the John B. Gray place. Before we follow the movements of Price and his descendents in more detail, a few of the known facts of the lives of the other sons and daughters of John and Anney Gray will be mentioned.

John Gray, Jr. and his family left Williamson County and settled temporarily in the Arkansas and Missouri Territories, where two of their children were born. Louise Shannon Dedman of Franklin has in her possession correspondence between the Shannons of Williamson County and those who had moved on to the Arkansas Territory in 1824, apparently in the company of John Gray, Jr. and

his family. These fascinating letters are of interest not only because mention is made of the John Gray Family and its hospitality on several occasions, but because they give vivid descriptions of life in the early settlements.

The quotation that follows is from one of the letters written by James Shannon, who apparently traveled with John Gray, Jr. and his wife to the Arkansas Territory. They had not yet arrived at their destination at the time the letter was written, November 8, 1824 from Prospect Township, Arkansas Territory. "John Gray wishes to be remembered to his people; Mr. Gray and family are well. Mrs. Gray appears to be fully reconciled to the trip as I expected, and I think fear must be at an end, etc." Another letter, dated November 10, 1827, co-signed by John Gray and Hugh Shannon, is written to the parents of young Robert Shannon, who died in the Gray home of "inflammatory fever." The courageous spirit of the pioneers is reflected over and over again throughout the correspondence. These people had to be brave as there were many hardships. Yet they were not hard and unfeeling. The element of tenderness, caring--true concern for friends and family members is always apparent.

John, Jr. and his family apparently returned to Williamson County during the 1830's. James Shannon had returned in 1825 to marry his friend's sister, one of John and Anney Gray's two daughters, Mary Ann Gray.¹⁹ (The Shannon correspondence indicates that they considered returning to the Arkansas Territory, but decided not to do so. This couple were the grandparents of Dr. Jim Shannon, whom my father remembers fondly as his family physician. He brought Daddy into the world on February 11, 1885.)

¹⁹/Williamson County Marriage Records, 1800-1850, Bejach and Gardiner, 1957.

Another daughter and the youngest child, Anna Gray, married Everett Owen, mothered several children and died at age 35. She is buried in the family cemetery near her parents.

It appears that by the early 1840's John and Anney Gray's four other sons (Elijah, Henry T., William, and James W.) had sold their holdings in Tennessee and moved to Missouri, possibly to join relatives already there. (Their uncle George and his family had made the journey to Callaway County in 1823.¹) These four sons and their families all appear in the 1850 census of Green County, Missouri.

Part III. PRICE GRAY - ZILPHA BLACKMAN Their Sons and Daughters

The earliest official record of Price Gray is that of his marriage to Zilpha Blackman December 24, 1810.¹⁹ (His brother John, Jr. married Zilpha's sister Susan Blackman 10 years later.) The bondsman for the ceremony was Robert Gray, whose identity is uncertain. He might have been a brother who proceeded their parents in death, an uncle, or a cousin; we don't know. Zilpha Blackman was the daughter of John and Nancy Hays Blackman, who settled in Davidson County well before Tennessee became a state in 1796. A separate sketch will be included on this branch of our family whose roots have been traced to William Blackman, that line's original colonist who arrived in Virginia in 1652.

Price Gray and his family can be found in the censuses of 1820, 1830, 1840, and 1850. His family grew and so did his fortunes. But life was not easy. His wife of 23 years died early in the year

1833 at the age of 40,²⁰ not long after the birth of their eighth child. Nine months later Price married Zilpha's 29-year-old sister, Mary Jane Blackman,²¹ and she became mother to his motherless brood, which included at that time Charles Hays, age 19, Alexander Washington, 17, James W., 12, Henry Price, 10, Susan Ann, 7, John Blackman, 5, Mary, 2, and Tabitha, 1. Mary and Tabitha died before reaching maturity.²⁰ Price became the father of one child by Mary Jane; she was Martha Elizabeth.

There are records of several land transactions involving Price Gray. In 1846 his was the highest bid in the auctioning of 200 acres of land by the sheriff.²² He paid \$19 for the tract.

Price Gray died on April 18, 1855 at age 68. His will,²³ written on October 19, 1852, provided for the disposition of his property among his surviving seven children and his wife Mary Jane. His widow survived him by five years.

Price Gray's eldest son, the first of the five brothers that my father mentioned in his autobiography, was Charles Hays Gray, Sr. (1814-1884). From Family Bible records we know that he had seven children by his first wife, Sarah Ewing Hughes, and four by his second wife, Mary A. Simmons.²⁴ According to a phone conversation with Margaret Gray Bohannon, (daughter of Charles Hays Gray, Jr.), the sons of the first marriage of Charles Hays Gray, Sr. moved to Texas, introducing a particular breed of cattle to

20/Buried in Price Gray Cemetery at homeplace on Boyd's Mill Pike.

21/Davidson Co., Tennessee Marriage Records.

22/Williamson County Deed Book S, p, 530-1.

23/Williamson County Will Book 11, p. 506-508.

24/Elizabeth Price, George Washington, Narcissa America, Mary Tabitha, James Richard, Charles Blackman, Virginia Hughes, Henry Thomas, Charles Hays, Jr., Eliza, Nannie Ada.

that section of the country. One of the two sons of the second marriage, Charles Hays Gray, Jr. and his two sisters, Eliza and Nannie Ada married, and had families. Charles and his elder brother, Henry Thomas, operated a country store near the beautiful old colonial homeplace. Both buildings are still standing.

The second of Price and Zilpha Gray's five sons was my father's grandfather, Alexander Washington (Sandy) Gray, (1816-1883), who married Maria Moore Thompson (1820-1888). (Maria's antecedents will be touched on briefly in a separate section of this account.) The most vivid memory my father has about this grandfather who died before his birth is the story his own father told him about their family's part in the aftermath of the Battle of Franklin, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. Sandy Gray brought home with him from the scene of the battle several wounded soldiers, transporting them in his wagon. He and his family nursed them back to health.

Another incident involving A. W. Gray's family during the Civil War should be mentioned here. The autobiography²⁵ of a cousin on the Thompson side, recently discovered in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina Library, leads to the conclusion that one of Alexander and Maria Gray's daughters wanted to arrange a dramatic escape for this Thompson cousin, ^{from Alabama,} who lost his leg during the Battle of Franklin and was imprisoned by the Union forces. He was too gallant to implicate this cousin he did not know in so daring a scheme,

²⁵/Prison Experiences--Camp Chase, Ohio, City Pt., Va., and Pt. Lookout, Md. Joseph N. Thompson, The Thompson Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C..

and managed to survive his ordeal, even though at one time he was near death while in a prison camp in Ohio.

Sandy and Maria had seven children,²⁶ three of whom died in infancy. My father's three aunts, all of whom he knew well, were Aunt Maggie, who married Rev. James N. McDonald, a leader in the Cumberland Presbyterian movement, and lived at Bell Buckle, Aunt Mary, who married Thomas Brown and lived on a beautiful farm north of Boyd's Mill Pike, and Aunt Laura, who married Philip Kinnard. The only son in the family, (my grandfather) Joseph Alexander Gray, Sr. (1855-1929) met his bride, Rachel Louise (Loulie) Russell (1858-1934), through his cousins Kate and Susie Gray (daughters of James W. Gray), who were her friends at Tennessee Female College in Franklin.

The third of Price's sons, James W. Gray and his wife Frances Amanda (Mandy) Ferguson had a dozen children,²⁷ most of whom my father knew when he was growing up. He also remembered visiting in the home of this great aunt and uncle as a young child. The long dining table with silver napkin rings and the foot-pedal-operated fly bush made a lasting impression on the young boy. Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Mandy died within a week of each other in June of 1894; my father was nine years old.

Of all of James W.'s children, John Blackman Gray's family

26/Margaret Zilpha, Mary O., Laura J., Joseph Alexander, Susan M., Wilson P., Juliet Emma.

27/Elizabeth Zilpha, Francis F., Sarah Jane (Jennie), Mary L. (Molly), James Price, John Blackman, Alexander Washington, Charles Henry, Kate E., William Hays, Margaret A., Susan A. (information from James W. Gray Family Bible).

was the one that my father felt closest to and knew best, mentioning them fondly in his autobiography. John Blackman Gray had married Lizzie B. Core, "a dear close friend" of Joseph Alexander Gray Sr.'s wife, Loulie Russell Gray (my father's mother, of course).

The fourth son of Price and Zilpha Gray was Henry Price Gray (1823-1885). He married Sarah Jane Southall and served in various capacities as a public official of Williamson County. His childless widow married a Presbyterian minister, Rev. James Marshall, after his death. My father remembers the visits of Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Jane during his boyhood.

The fifth child and first daughter of Price and Zilpha was Susan Ann Gray, who married John R. Ferguson, brother of James W. Gray's wife Amanda. During his boyhood my father remembers his mother's distaste for the visits of this childless great aunt, because she smoked a pipe. John and Susan Ferguson were the victims of real tragedy during the Civil War, when their home and all their possessions were burned. Like many of their friends and neighbors, they were apparently ruined financially and borrowed heavily from family members. To quote from the legal records²⁸ dealing with their financial problems, "---but whereas by the vicissitudes of the times, the losses by war and the burning of the dwelling of the said John R. and Susan Ann, all furniture, wearing apparel, books, papers were utterly destroyed, the said John R. and Susan Ann barely escaping with their lives, etc."

28/Williamson Co., Tennessee Deed Book I, p. 564-565.

The sixth child and fifth son of Price and Zilpha was John Blackman Gray (1828-1919), fondly remembered as a good and kind man by those who knew him. His first wife Margaret died at age 27 soon after the birth of her fourth (or fifth?) child, Wilson Price Gray. His second wife Mary Jane (Molly) Flippen was the mother of Jennie Gray. Wilson Price and Jennie married a brother and sister, Eugenia Bostick and James A. Bostick.

The seventh and eighth children of Price and Zilpha were Mary Gray, who died at age 12, and Tabitha, who died at age two. Both are buried near their mother in the family cemetery.

Price and his second wife, Mary Jane Blackman (mentioned earlier) had one daughter, Martha Elizabeth, who married John M. Byers. The only information we have on this line is that this couple had a son, David P. Byers.²⁹

With this generation, we conclude an attempt to record some of the information that has been collected in the past two and one half years on what we assume to be the first four generations of our Gray Family in America. It is purposely brought to a close at about the time of my father's birth, since information on his parents and later generations is included in his autobiography. The remainder of this account is devoted to information on three of the maternal lines that emerged as the search for information on the Grays intensified. In each case a great deal of information has come to light, some of it only after diligently following hunches, some of it literally handed to me

by other researchers. These lines will be covered only superficially, although this approach certainly does not mean that they are of any less interest or importance.

The search has been at times fun, fullfilling, and frustrating. But it is not finished. Hopefully, other family members will help in the task of compiling a more complete family history at some time in the future.

Part IV. THOMPSON - BUCHANAN

Maria Moore Thompson (1820-1888), wife of Alexander W. Gray, was one of nine children³⁰ of James Thompson (1773-1848)³¹ and Margaret Buchanan Thompson (1779-1860).³¹ James Thompson's marriage to Margaret (Peggy) Buchanan on May 14, 1800 is recorded in the Davidson County, Tennessee records. His will³² is dated March 1, 1848, five days before he died. It is known that James came to Tennessee at an early date, probably with other members of his family, but not his parents, who stayed in Orange County, North Carolina.

His sister, Nancy, married Thomas Thompson (possibly a cousin) and settled in Davidson County, they being the founders of the branch of the family for whom Thompson Lane in Nashville is named. James' brothers Lawrence and Joseph were active businessmen in the area before settling in Florence, Alabama. (Their descendents have been prominent in Southern financial

³⁰/Sarah M., Susan Ann, Margaret, Mary, Maria, Thomas J., James M., Joseph B., and an infant son who died young.

³¹/Thompson-Shelton Cemetery, Williamson County, Tennessee.

³²/Williamson Co. Will Book 9, p. 67-68.

circles.) Correspondence³³ between Rebecca, the wife of Lawrence Thompson, and her Thompson nephews, Joseph B. (son of "our" James), John (son of Thomas and Nancy) and Jacob (son of another brother, Nicholas) during the period 1839 to 1855 gives us considerable information about this family. Joseph B. was a young man at the time and had moved to Louisiana during the late 1830's to run a plantation for his uncles. The fact that Jacob was serving in Congress during part of the period also adds interest to the exchange of letters. (Jacob was later Secretary of the Interior under President Buchanan.)

We know that our James Thompson was the son of Joseph and Sarah McAlister Thompson. (Joseph is a recurring name in the Thompson family, generation after generation -- that's of course the source of the Joseph in Joseph Alexander Gray, Maria Thompson Gray's son.) We are fortunate that Sarah Thompson left a will,³⁴ giving the names of all her children³⁵ who survived her death in 1831 at age 83. She and her husband are buried in the old Eno Presbyterian Church Cemetery near Hillsborough, North Carolina, an early capital of the state. (Apparently many settlers from that area came to Williamson and Davidson Counties in the late 18th century, bringing the name Hillsborough and other North Carolina names with them.)

³³/Thompson Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

³⁴/Orange County (North Carolina) Wills, 1785-1865, Vol. XIII.

³⁵/John, James, Jilsey, Ann, Thomas, Lawrence, Rebecca, Joseph, and Nicholas.

Information on file in the Tennessee State Archives³⁶ states that Joseph was the son of Capt. Lawrence Thompson and Margaret Logue. Letters in the Samuel Thompson Papers in the Southern Historical Collection at Chapel Hill lead to the conclusion that Joseph was the brother of Capt. Lawrence Thompson and the son of Thomas Thompson. This point is not settled.

Looking into the Thompson Family history has been made especially interesting by the location of the two separate sets of family papers in the Southern Historical Collection. All the documents, but especially the letters, make fascinating reading.

BUCHANAN

The first inkling that I might have a Buchanan ancestor, as well as a Buchanan husband, came when we discovered an especially old grave (for Williamson Co.) in the James Thompson Cemetery. Robert Buchanan, who is buried there, died on October 4, 1818 at age 85.

A streak of luck (and a tip from my husband) put me in touch with two ardent researchers on the Buchanans, who have generously shared their notes with me. A great deal of research has been done on this line, but there are many missing pieces to the puzzle.

We do know that the above mentioned Robert and Mary Buchanan were the parents of James Thompson's wife, Margaret, as well as Samuel, Esther, and Martha. They lived in Augusta County, Virginia before coming to Tennessee. Martha married Thomas Edmondson and came to the Nashville settlement at a very early date.

³⁶/Bedinger, Brown, Dorsey, etc. Collection, folder 3, Ancestral Tables.

A granddaughter of this couple, Mrs. Bethia White Bell, was often told by her grandmother of being one of the women who molded bullets all night in a stubbornly contested battle with the Indians at Buchanan's Station near Nashville.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Buchanan research is the existence of a paper dictated to Thomas Wesley Buchanan (her great nephew) by "our" Margaretta Buchanan Thompson on May 16, 1860. She died shortly thereafter -- on June 9, 1860 at age 81. According to my fellow researchers, the remarkable thing about this interview is that none of her statements about her several relatives has been discounted. (Unfortunately, there were many questions that were not asked of her.) She said that her grandfather "Samuel came from Ireland to America and settled in Pennsylvania, and reared five sons named: Andrew, Robert, Moses, John, and Samuel, etc." We know that this Samuel Buchanan married Martha (Keys?) and settled in Washington Co., Virginia. Some of the many records concerning Samuel Buchanan pertain to his activities as an elder in the Presbyterian Church. Both the Buchanan and Thompson families were active in this denomination.

Part V. BLACKMAN - HAYS

As is noted in the preceding sketch, Price Gray's two wives, Zilpha and Mary Jane Blackman were the daughters of John and Nancy Hays Blackman. Their sister Susan married Price's brother John Gray, Jr..

Fortunately, we have access to first hand information on

John Blackman and his family. On file in the Tennessee State Archives are notes³⁷ dictated by a granddaughter of John and Nancy Hays Blackman, Susan Blackman Clark, widow of Dr. Wm. M. Clark, owner and editor of the "Nashville Banner" during the 1880's. She is quoted as saying, "John came (to Tennessee from North Carolina) to live near his brother, Bennett Blackman, and his sister, Mrs. Charles Hays."³⁸ The two owned much land about Antioch -- the Whittemore's present home as well as the old Blackman place." Her notes include many details on family members. She adds that after Nancy's death, "Our grandfather John Blackman married a second wife, a widow. I do not remember her name, but I have pleasant memories of her. Dear Grandpa was a gentle and amiable man, giving children a good time when at his home." Susie Blackman Clark had the old Family Bible in her possession, and comments, "Charles Hays was the one I remember as reading that old Bible. He gave it to Mary Jane Gray, their niece, and she gave it to me about 1858 or 1859. She died 1860." (It might be noted here that the Blackman, Hays, and Gray families all used the names "Charles Hays" and "John Blackman" over and over again in naming their sons.)

John Blackman's name and that of his brother Bennett appear frequently in the early records of Middle Tennessee. The two brothers owned land in Davidson, Hickman, Williamson, and Maury Counties. They apparently both settled in Maury Co. in the early

37/Blackman File, Tennessee State Archives

38/The home that Charles Hays built for his bride, Ann Blackman is one of the residences featured in Architecture of Middle Tennessee, The Historic American Buildings Survey, ed., Brumbaugh, Strayhorn and Gore, 1974.

1820's. The simply designed, two-story brick home³⁹ that Bennett Blackman built for his family in Maury County is ^{one of} the oldest house standing in that county today.

John Blackman died in Maury Co., Tennessee, November 3, 1844, age 76. His obituary may be found in the November 7, 1844 edition of "The Nashville Whig."

John Blackman's ancestry has been traced by professional genealogists back to William Blackman, who arrived in the Colony of Virginia in 1652, as headright of Richard Thomas. His handwritten will,⁴⁰ which was probated April 1, 1698, states that he leaves "to son John upper half of plantation, guns, furniture, and young horse, when he shall arrive to manly age, I mean my son and not the horse."

This early John, the son of William, was born about 1678. He and his wife Sarah settled in Bertie Precinct, North Carolina and had among other children, a son Stephen. Stephen and his wife, Ann Snell King, a widow, were the parents of the John Blackman, who is the subject of our original discussion.

The notes on the Blackmans (most of them generously given to me) are much too voluminous to summarize easily. But it is apparent that this branch of our family played an active role in the early history of our country, holding public office⁴¹ and fighting for the independence⁴² that finally came.

³⁹/Historic Maury County, Tennessee in Pictures, Vol. 1, Maury Co. Historical Society, 1966.

⁴⁰/Henrico Co., Virginia Deeds, 1697-1699, p. 66.

⁴¹/Colonial Records of North Carolina, Vol. IX, 1771-1775, p. 447-448.

⁴²/Roster and Soldiers of the Tennessee Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1894-1960.

HAYS (HAYES)

The Blackmans were closely associated with the Hays, both in North Carolina and Tennessee. The name (Hays, Hayes) is spelled both ways in records in both states; there seems to be no consistency of usage even among members of the same immediate family.

We know that Nancy Hays, the first wife of John Blackman (and the mother of "our" Zilpha), was the daughter of John Hays. His will⁴³ was written on December 29, 1781; we do not know when it was probated. However, we know that his death occurred between December 29, 1781 and May 13, 1791, since it was on that date that a guardian was appointed in court⁴⁴ for his orphaned children, Nancy, Charles, and Susanna "Hayes", all of whom were destined to marry Blackmans.

⁴³/Johnston County, North Carolina Wills, 1760-1830, Vol. II, p. 447-448.

⁴⁴/Johnston County, North Carolina Court Minutes, 1783-1793, p. 14.

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Part VI. THE ANCESTRY OF RACHEL LOULIE RUSSELL

The quantity of material available on the family of Loulie Russell Gray, wife of Joseph Alexander Gray, Sr., prohibits its inclusion in this account of my father's ancestors. Considerable research has been done on her lines by others, (particularly Catherine Kelley Gilliam) brief accounts have been written, and family histories have been compiled on two of the early maternal lines, Alston and Rutherford. The following statement briefly summarizes some of the available information on these fascinating people.

Rachel Louise (Loulie) and her eight sisters and two brothers were the children of Madison Monroe Russell and his wife, whose maiden name was Rachel Alston Jones. Robert Russell was apparently the original Russell colonist; he came to Virginia from England, probably around 1750. He and his wife, Ann Beard, had eight children. Their son James married Rosannah Rutherford; they were the parents of our ancestor Pleasant Russell, the Tennessee settler who married Theodocia Mayberry, daughter of Henry and Mary Magdalene Carnes Mayberry. Madison Monroe Russell was one of eight surviving children of this couple. (An interesting sketch on the Russells has been written by Mr. A. J. Carmichael, Jr., a descendent of Madison Monroe and Rachel Alston Jones Russell.)

The Mayberry Family history has been examined in some detail by others. One of the more interesting traditions connected with this line is the account of Theodocia Mayberry's maternal grand-

mother's depositing the ashes of her martyred husband in an urn and fleeing with her two young daughters from Germany to Virginia. Gabriel Carnes had been burned at the stake in a wave of religious persecution in Wurtemberg. The urn that carried her father's ashes and a prayer book belonging to Mary Magdalene Carnes, who married Henry Mayberry, (parents of Theodocia), are the proud possessions of a present day descendent. They were on display for many years in the Tennessee Historical Museum in the War Memorial Building in Nashville.

Rachel Alston Jones, wife of Madison Monroe Russell, was the daughter of Willis Jones and Rachel Alston, who came to Tennessee from North Carolina. Willis Jones' ancestors were prominent in the early settlement of North Carolina. In fact the family of his great grandparents, Edward Jones and his French Huguenot wife, Abigail Sucre Jones, was one of the first to move from Virginia into the Piedmont area of North Carolina. A great deal has been written on these people, the "Shoccoe Jones Family of North Carolina." But I am aware of no family history. An interesting point that I might mention here is that the father of Willis Jones, Edmund Jones, gave 200 acres of his plantation for the establishment of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The family of Rachel Alston, wife of Willis Jones, is considered in great detail in The Alstons and Allstons of North and South Carolina, written by Dr. Joseph A. Groves in 1901. Dr. Groves traces his Alston ancestry back to William Alston, who died in 1307, impressive but a bit too far for me. However, most of his research seems to be well-documented.

The progenitor of the family in North Carolina was John

Alston, who was baptized at Felmersham, Bedfordshire, England on December 5, 1673. He held a great many public offices, was colonel of the militia, and vestryman of St. Paul's Parish, Chowan County, North Carolina. (The beautiful old church that was built in 1736 is still standing in Edenton, North Carolina.) An interesting quote concerning this family is from William Byrd's well-known Histories of the Dividing Line. John Alston is mentioned on two occasions. The author stated that on March 19, 1728, "Majr Alston & Capt. Baker made us a visit & din'd with us." On March 24, 1728, Byrd stated: "This being Sunday the People flock't from all parts partly out of curiosity, and partly out of Devotion. Among the Female part of our Congregation, there was not much Beauty, the most fell to Majr. Alston's Daughter, who is said to be no niggard of it. Our chaplain made some Christians, but con'd persuade nobody to be marry'd because every Country Justice can do that Jobb for them. Major Alston & Captain Baker dined with us." (p. 89).



